

ARTICLE APPENDED  
ON PAGE **33**

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# NATO's Contentious Southern Front

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ISTANBUL — Secretary of State George P. Shultz's first trip to Turkey and Greece, the southern flank of NATO, comes when questions are being raised once again about the status of American bases in both countries. Here, where Soviet and NATO forces face each other along thousands of miles of land and water frontiers, Mr. Shultz is attempting one of his more difficult diplomatic tasks: to reduce the friction between Greece and Turkey, NATO allies who distrust each other more than they distrust the Soviet Union. And specifically Mr. Shultz needs to use his skills to insure continued American access to the bases.

In an era of intercontinental nuclear-armed missiles, the attention focused on American bases here or in the Philippines may appear unwarranted. But these "bases" — four in Greece and about 16 in Turkey — serve many functions. Air bases such as Incirlik in Turkey allow American planes to be poised for attacks on the Soviet Union. Americans based in Turkey close to the Bosphorus could block Soviet forces trying to sail from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.

Early-warning radar installations and radar surveillance planes based in Greece and Turkey keep track of Soviet air and sea power in the region. Listening posts in Turkey provide the United States and the NATO alliance with an estimated 25 percent of the hard intelligence available to the West about Soviet military forces and missile testing. Navy bases in Greece serve as repair stations for the American Sixth Fleet.

The problems for Mr. Shultz are quite different in Turkey and Greece. The Turks, who rely heavily on American support in a world in which they have few allies, have said they would like to continue a 1980 defense cooperation agreement with the United States that expired last year and is being extended on a year-to-year basis.

But the Turks made it clear last year that they thought the United States had not lived up to the bargain it made for the bases. They grumbled about the level of American aid and the Greek lobby's success in convincing Congress that, for every \$10 in assistance it gives Turkey, Greece should receive \$7. The Turks last year suggested a formal treaty on the bases, thereby forcing the Senate, which must approve such a pact, to share responsibility for supplying more aid. Turkey gets about \$1 billion in assistance, of which about \$850 million is military. The Turks would like at least \$300 million more. But Washington rejected the idea of a treaty, saying it would cause more problems than it was worth.

But they have also argued that Washington should give Turkey, which has 800,000 troops, most of them with out-of-date equipment, as much

aid as Israel receives — about \$3 billion a year.

In the 1970's, the Turks, angered at an American arms embargo after their invasion of Cyprus, retaliated by closing some bases. The current Government of Turgut Ozal, who has given priority to better relations with Washington, is not likely to take such drastic action, even if more aid is not forthcoming. But many in the Pentagon argue that an aid increase now might provide insurance for the future. Mr. Shultz, in his talks with Turkish leaders tomorrow and Tuesday, is expected to have an exchange of letters with the Turkish Foreign Minister expressing America's intention of doing as much as possible for Turkey, given budget constraints.

The Secretary of State may have a tougher time in Athens. The Government of Andreas Papandreou, who is given to rhetorical flourishes at Washington's expense, has angered and baffled the Reagan Administration. But despite his promise to pull Greece out of NATO and adopt a more neutral course, Prime Minister Papandreou has remained in the alliance and even strengthened its role in air defenses. Greece has bought 40 American F-16's and stopped talking about closing the bases when its agreement expires in 1988.

But Washington would like something more reassuring. Mr. Shultz said the United States wanted to know as soon as possible whether Greece would continue the base agreement or whether to start searching for alternate facilities in Italy and Turkey. Clearly, Washington does not want to wait until the last months of 1988, then face new aid demands as payment for retaining the bases. "We need to know where we're going here and if the bases are to be abandoned, then we'll need to make other arrangements," Mr. Shultz said. "I don't have in mind some precise time, but we want to tie up the views on that as rapidly as possible. The year 1988 is not that far away when you think about the kind of investment commitments needed with a base structure."